

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDRENS AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS) NON-WARD ADOPTION ASSISTANCE / SUBSIDY ELGIBILITY

General Non-Ward Adoption Subsidy Eligibility Requirements¹

- The child must be under the age of 18;
- The prospective adoptive parent(s) must be residents of Illinois;
- The child must be a citizen of the United States or a Qualified Alien;
- The child must be legally free for adoption;
 - A termination of parental rights order, Surrender, Consent, or Death Certificate must be provided for the mother;
 - A termination of parental rights order, Surrender, Consent, or Death Certificate must be provided for the father.
- The child must meet the special needs criteria established by the Department in Rule 302.310 a) and b);
 - Physical, mental or emotions disability; or
 - Child is over the age of 1 year old; or
 - Child is a member of a sibling group being adopted together where at least one child meets one or more of the criteria; or
 - Child is being adopted by an adoptive parent(s) who have previously adopted a title IV-E eligible child born of the same mother or father.
- Reasonable efforts must be made to place the child without a subsidy or documentation must be provided to establish that efforts were not made because the child had a significant emotional bond to the adoptive parent(s);

¹ Social Security Act, section 473; The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005; U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Welfare Policy Manual, section 8.2B

- Appropriate background checks on all household members over the age of 13 must be completed;
 - For all subsidized adoption cases the background checks listed below must have been conducted within **2 years** prior to the subsidy approval:
 - Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS) and Sex Offender Registry (SOR) checks of all household members ages 13 and over.
 - Fingerprint-based Illinois State Police (ISP) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) checks of all household members ages 17 and over.
- The subsidy amount must not exceed that which the child would have received in foster care;
- One of the following four criteria must be met;
 - The adoptee is eligible for SSI benefits²;
 - If an adoptee is eligible for SSI benefits, the adoption can either be facilitated through a non-profit adoption agency or completed with the assistance of an adoption attorney and the DCFS Statewide Adoption Administrator.
 - The adoptee was previously adopted with title IV-E eligibility;
 - The adoptee is a child of a title IV-E eligible minor parent who was a ward and the “ward with infant” special service fee was being paid;
 - The adoptee’s birth family must have met the AFDC eligibility requirements at the time the adoptee was relinquished or judicially removed from the home;
 - Within 6 months of the last date the child lived with a birth parent or other specified relative, the adoption attorney must file a separate petition with the court to judicially remove the child from the home. The petition must only pertain to the judicial removal; and
 - There must be a subsequent and specific judicial determination / court order to the effect that remaining in the home would be contrary to the child’s welfare. The court order / determination must be the first court ruling pertaining to the removal from the home and must only pertain to the removal. It should reference specific facts of the case as to why it is contrary to the child’s welfare to remain in the home; and
 - Documentation of the family composition; and
 - Documentation of the financial situation for the family.
- If the prospective adoptive parent(s) is represented by an attorney who is a member of the DCFS Statewide Adoption Attorney Panel, the attorney must review the subsidy with the prospective parent(s) before the adoption is finalized;
- The ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (CFS 1800 C-A) must receive final approval by the Department before the adoption is finalized.

² Social Security Act, sections 473 (a)(2) and 473 (c); Public Law 109-171, Deficit Reduction Act of 2005; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Welfare Policy Manual, section 8.2B

Overview of the Non-Ward Adoption Subsidy Eligibility and Approval Process

Detailed, step-by-step instructions are included later in this document.

- An eligibility determination must be made via the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1);
- If the child is deemed eligible, the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION (1800-B-A) and the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A) must be completed;
- The ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A) must be approved by DCFS;
- The adoption must be finalized;
- Case opening information must be submitted by the adoption agency or adoption attorney to the DCFS Post Adoption Unit to initiate the subsidy payment and medical card.

STATEWIDE ADOPTION ADMINISTRATOR

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POST ADOPTION UNITS – MAILING ADDRESS

DCFS - Cook Region
1911 S. Indiana
Chicago, IL 60616
Attn: Adoption Intake Coordinator

DCFS - Northern Region
595 S. State Street
Elgin, IL 60123
Attn: Adoption Intake Coordinator

DCFS - Central Region
2125 S. 1st Street
Champaign, IL 61820
Attn: Adoption Intake Coordinator

DCFS - Southern Region
10 Collinsville Avenue
East St. Louis, IL 62201
Attn: Adoption Intake Coordinator

ADOPTION SUPERVISOR

DCFS Cook Region – Pamela Mills
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Pamela.Mills@illinois.gov

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10 Collinsville Avenue
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618-583-2184
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OFFICE OF LEGAL SERVICES

Christina Schneider
DCFS Office of Legal Services
160 N. LaSalle, 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601
312-814-7298
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DCFS ADVOCACY OFFICE

800-232-3798
217-524-2029

DCFS ADOPTION SUPPORT LINE

888-96-ADOPT or
888-962-3678

DCFS ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION UNIT – MANAGER

Missy Cimarossa
DCFS Eligibility Determination Unit Manager
406 E. Monroe Street, Station 430
Springfield, IL 62701

DCFS FEDERAL FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION UNIT – AA REVIEW TEAM

DCFS – AA Review Team
406 E. Monroe Street, Station 300
Springfield, IL 62701

SPECIALIZED FOSTER CARE SERVICES

Mayra Burgos-Biott
DCFS Specialized Foster Care Services Unit
100 W. Randolph Street, 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601
312-814-5483

Adoption Subsidies for Non-Wards
The Application and Adoption Agreement Process:
Procedure for Requesting Approval of & Processing a Non-Ward Subsidy

Before proceeding with the following steps:

- Ensure that the child meets the eligibility and special needs criteria in DCFS Rule 302.310; and
- Ensure that a Petition for Adoption has been filed in adoption court.

The forms (CFS 1800A-1, 1800B-A, 1800C-A) can be obtained from the DCFS website (www.state.il.us/dcf/library/com_communications_forms.shtml), or from the DCFS Advocacy Office.

There are two types of non-ward adoptions:

- Agency Adoptions
 - The adoption is completed with the assistance of an adoption agency. The agency Caseworker completes the paperwork and should retain copies of all documents.
- Private Adoptions
 - No adoption agency is involved. The prospective adoptive parent(s) or the adoption attorney must contact DCFS to arrange for the completion of the paperwork on behalf of the family.
 - The only cases that can be submitted to DCFS without assistance from a licensed adoption agency are those in which the child's subsidy eligibility is based on eligibility of child-based SSI benefits.

AGENCY ADOPTIONS:

1. The agency Caseworker completes the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1).
 - a. The agency Caseworker's email address should be included on the last page of the 1800 A-1 form near the agency's mailing address.
2. The agency Caseworker collects the needed supporting documents:
 - a. Petition for Adoption (file stamped by the Clerk of the Court),
 - b. Birth Certificate or INS documentation if the child is not a US citizen,
 - c. Documentation of how the child met the Special Needs requirement,
 - d. Surrender/Consent/Termination Order/Death Certificate for the mother,
 - e. Surrender/Consent/Termination Order/Death Certificate for the father,
 - f. Documentation of efforts to place w/o subsidy or documentation of significant emotional attachment (Investigatory Report or Home Study),
 - g. Documentation of household members and their ages or dates of birth (Investigatory Report),
 - h. Background check results for all applicable household members (dated to allow sufficient time for the Adoption Assistance Agreement to be approved before expiration), and
 - i. Documentation for one of the following options:
 - i. Documentation to prove SSI Eligibility,
 - ii. Documentation of previous Adoption Assistance eligibility
 1. The same documents listed above must be included for the first adoption in order to prove the eligibility status of the first adoption,
 - iii. Documentation of the child being a child of a title IV-E eligible minor ward for whom the department was paying the "Ward with Infant" special service fee,
 - iv. Documentation to prove AFDC Eligibility
 1. Removal court order containing a finding that it was "contrary to the welfare of the child" to remain the parent's home,
 2. Documentation of the family composition,
 3. Documentation of the financial situation for the family.
3. The agency Caseworker submits the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1) packet to the appropriate regional DCFS Adoption Intake Coordinator.
4. The DCFS Adoption Intake Coordinator assigns the case to a DCFS Adoption Specialist.
5. The DCFS Adoption Specialist will review the packet to determine if the information is complete and if it is appropriate to proceed.
 - a. If needed, the packet is returned to the agency Caseworker for corrections.
6. When the packet is identified as being complete, the DCFS Adoption Specialist submits the packet to the DCFS Adoption Supervisor.

7. The DCFS Adoption Supervisor reviews the packet.
 - a. If it is appropriate to approve, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor signs the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1).
 - b. If it is not appropriate to approve, the packet is returned to the agency Caseworker for corrections.
 - i. After the corrections have been made, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor signs the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1).
8. After the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1) is signed, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor submits the packet to the DCFS Eligibility Determination Unit (EDU) Manager.
9. The DCFS EDU Manager reviews the case and determines if the child will be title IV-E eligible.
 - a. If the case is title IV-E eligible, the DCFS EDU Manager submits the packet to DCFS Legal with documentation of title IV-E eligibility.
 - b. If the case is not title IV-E eligible, the DCFS EDU Manager submits the packet to the DCFS Adoption Supervisor.
 - i. The DCFS Adoption Supervisor mails the packet to the agency Caseworker with documentation that the case is not eligible for a subsidy.
 1. No further action is required.
10. If the case is title IV-E eligible, DCFS Legal reviews the packet.
 - a. If the case meets the legal criteria, the parties will be notified and the packet will be returned to the agency Caseworker with documentation of the subsidy rate.
 - i. If the child is SSI eligible, the subsidy packet will be forwarded to the DCFS Specialized Foster Care Unit for consideration of whether the case is appropriate for a specialized monthly payment rate. After a decision is made regarding the rate, the packet will be returned to the agency Caseworker with documentation of the subsidy rate.
 - b. If the case does not meet the legal criteria, all the parties will be notified and the subsidy packet will be returned to the agency Caseworker.
11. DCFS Legal notifies the DCFS EDU Manager, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor and the agency Caseworker via email of the approval decision.

12. The agency Caseworker completes the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION (1800-B-A) and the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A). Four complete subsidy packets are required.
 - a. All supporting documentation must be included (1 copy):
 - i. Birth Records
 - ii. Medical Records
 - iii. Diagnoses
 - iv. Prognoses
 - v. Assessments
 - vi. Evaluations
 - vii. Therapy Reports
 - viii. IEP/401 Plans
13. The agency Caseworker reviews the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION (1800-B-A) and draft ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A) with the prospective adoptive parent(s).
14. The prospective adoptive parent(s) can choose to review the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION (1800-B-A) and draft ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A) with their attorney.
 - a. If the prospective adoptive parent(s) is utilizing an attorney from the DCFS Statewide Adoption Attorney panel, the subsidy review by the attorney with the prospective adoptive parent(s) is mandatory.
15. The prospective adoptive parent(s) signs and dates all four copies of the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION (1800-B-A) and draft ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A) in blue ink.
16. The agency Caseworker or the attorney submits the four subsidy packets, including the previously approved ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1) packet, and the supporting documentation to the appropriate DCFS Adoption Supervisor.
17. The DCFS Adoption Supervisor reviews and approves the appropriate components of the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A).
 - a. If corrections or additions are needed, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor will inform the agency Caseworker.
18. The approved subsidy packet and the supporting documentation are submitted to the Federal Financial Participation (FFP) AA Review Team for additional approval (claiming purposes).
 - a. If corrections or additions are needed, the AA Review Team will notify the DCFS Adoption Supervisor.
 - i. The corrections must be addressed prior to the finalization of the adoption.
 - b. The AA Review Team will notify the DCFS Adoption Supervisor after the case is approved by FFP.

19. Two approved subsidy packets are returned to the agency Caseworker.
20. One approved subsidy packet is retained by the DCFS Adoption Supervisor.
21. The agency Caseworker provides the prospective adoptive parent(s) with one approved subsidy packet.
22. The adoption is finalized.
23. Case opening information is submitted by the agency Caseworker to the appropriate DCFS Post Adoption Unit.
 - a. Adoption Decree or Final Judgment for Adoption
 - b. Termination order (if parental rights were terminated in adoption court)
 - c. Payment Authorization form (CFS 906)
 - d. Case Opening form (CFS 1410)
24. The DCFS Post Adoption Unit will fax a copy of the Adoption Decree or Final Judgment for Adoption to the FFP AA Review Team and request the subsidy packet.
25. The FFP AA Review Team will mail the subsidy packet to the appropriate DCFS Post Adoption Unit.
26. The DCFS Post Adoption Unit will open the case with an effective date of the adoption finalization.

PRIVATE ADOPTIONS:

1. The prospective adoptive parent(s) or the adoption attorney contacts the DCFS Adoption Supervisor in their region and requests assistance.
2. The DCFS Adoption Supervisor assigns the case to a DCFS Adoption Specialist.
3. The DCFS Adoption Specialist completes the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1) with the assistance of the prospective adoptive parent(s) or adoption attorney.
4. The DCFS Adoption Specialist, with the assistance of the prospective adoptive parent(s) or adoption attorney, collects the needed supporting documents:
 - a. Petition for Adoption (with a file stamp)
 - b. Birth Certificate or INS documentation if the child is not a US citizen
 - c. Documentation of how the child met the Special Needs requirement
 - d. Surrender/Consent/Termination/Death Certificate for the mother
 - e. Surrender/Consent/Termination/Death Certificate for the father
 - f. Documentation of efforts to place w/o subsidy or documentation of significant emotional attachment (Investigatory Report or Home Study)
 - g. Documentation of household members and their ages or dates of birth (Investigatory Report)
 - h. Background check results for all applicable household members (dated to allow sufficient time for the Adoption Assistance Agreement to be approved before expiration)
 - i. Documentation to prove SSI Eligibility
5. When the packet is identified as being complete, the DCFS Adoption Specialist submits the packet to the DCFS Adoption Supervisor.
6. The DCFS Adoption Supervisor reviews the packet.
 - a. If it is appropriate to approve, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor signs the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1).
 - b. If it is not appropriate to approve, the packet is returned to the prospective adoptive parent(s) or adoption attorney for corrections.
 - i. After the corrections have been made, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor signs the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1).
7. After the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN NOT UNDER THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (1800 A-1) is signed, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor submits the packet to the DCFS Eligibility Determination Unit (EDU) Manager.

8. The DCFS EDU Manager reviews the case and determines if the child will be title IV-E eligible.
 - a. If the case is title IV-E eligible, the DCFS EDU Manager submits the packet to DCFS Legal with documentation of title IV-E eligibility.
 - b. If the case is not title IV-E eligible, the DCFS EDU Manager submits the packet to the DCFS Adoption Supervisor.
 - i. The DCFS Adoption Supervisor mails the packet to the prospective adoptive parent(s) or adoption attorney with documentation that the case is not eligible for a subsidy.
 1. No further action is required.
9. If the case is title IV-E eligible, DCFS Legal reviews the packet.
 - a. If the case meets the legal criteria, the subsidy packet will be forwarded to the DCFS Specialized Foster Care Unit for consideration of whether the case is appropriate for a specialized monthly payment rate. After a decision is made regarding the rate, the packet will be returned to the agency Caseworker with documentation of the subsidy rate.
 - b. If the case does not meet the legal criteria, all the parties will be notified and the subsidy packet will be returned to the agency Caseworker.
10. DCFS Legal notifies the DCFS EDU Manager, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor, the prospective adoptive parent(s), and the adoption attorney via email or mail of the approval decision.
11. The DCFS Adoption Supervisor returns the packet to the DCFS Adoption Specialist.
12. The DCFS Adoption Specialist completes the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION (1800-B-A) and the draft ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A). Four complete subsidy packets are required.
 - a. All supporting documentation must be included (1 copy):
 - i. Birth Records
 - ii. Medical Records
 - iii. Diagnoses
 - iv. Prognoses
 - v. Assessments
 - vi. Evaluations
 - vii. Therapy Reports
 - viii. IEP/401 Plans
13. The DCFS Adoption Specialist reviews the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION (1800-B-A) and the draft ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A) with the prospective adoptive parent(s).
14. The prospective adoptive parent(s) can choose to review the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION (1800-B-A) and the draft ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A) with their attorney.
 - a. If the prospective adoptive parent(s) is utilizing an attorney from the DCFS Statewide Adoption Attorney panel, the subsidy review is mandatory.

15. The prospective adoptive parent(s) signs and dates all four copies of the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION (1800-B-A) and the draft ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A) in blue ink.
16. The prospective adoptive parent(s) or the adoption attorney submits the four complete subsidy packets to the DCFS Adoption Specialist.
17. The DCFS Adoption Specialist submits the four complete subsidy packets and the supporting documentation to the DCFS Adoption Supervisor.
18. The DCFS Adoption Supervisor reviews and approves the appropriate components of the ADOPTION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (1800-C-A).
 - a. If corrections or additions are needed, the DCFS Adoption Supervisor will inform the prospective adoptive parent(s) and/or the adoption attorney.
19. The approved subsidy packet and supporting documentation is submitted to the Federal Financial Participation (FFP) AA Review Team for additional approval (claiming purposes).
 - a. If corrections or additions are needed, the AA Review Team will notify the DCFS Adoption Supervisor.
 - i. The corrections must be addressed prior to the finalization of the adoption.
 - b. The AA Review Team will notify the DCFS Adoption Supervisor after the case is approved by FFP.
20. Two approved subsidy packets are returned to the prospective adoptive parent(s).
21. One approved subsidy packet is retained by the DCFS Adoption Supervisor.
22. The adoption is finalized.
23. Case opening information is submitted by the adoption attorney to the appropriate DCFS Post Adoption Unit.
 - a. Adoption Decree or Final Judgment for Adoption
 - b. Termination order (if parental rights were terminated in adoption court)
 - c. Payment Authorization form (CFS 906)
 - d. Case Opening form (CFS 1410)
24. The DCFS Post Adoption Unit will fax a copy of the Adoption Decree or Final Judgment for Adoption to the FFP AA Review Team and request the subsidy packet.
25. The FFP AA Review Team will mail the subsidy packet to the appropriate DCFS Post Adoption Unit.
26. The DCFS Post Adoption Unit will open the case with an effective date of the adoption finalization.